



BBRSD Family and Student Update **August 28, 2020**

Superintendent's Office

Dear Family, Staff, & Community Members in the Berlin-Boylston Regional School District:

As we near the start of our school year, I am hoping that you and your family are all safe and well, and that you had an opportunity to enjoy the spectacular summer weather. It is difficult to comprehend, lulled by the warmth of this season, how much we have already come through together. Weighing heavily on all of our minds now is what is to come in the months ahead. We are truly traveling an uncharted course that brings with it levels of stress, anxiety, confusion and fear. That is why it is more important than ever that we continue to stay connected to one another, to our families and friends, to our school community, and to those in the medical field that guide our decisions. As we look ahead, we must remain vigilant to mitigating risk factors for the spread of COVID-19 by following safety guidelines and practicing wellness for ourselves and with those we love and care for every day.

The opening of schools has historically been marked by excitement, anticipation, and joy. It comes each year at this time, as surely as the change in seasons. We expect to see our buses rumbling down the road, our student back on the playgrounds, and our classes filled with engaged students and teachers. As we consider what the 2020 year has brought us to date, however, we know that this school year will be unlike any other that has been experienced in our lifetime. How we move forward depends upon our trust in, and support for one another as we make decisions based on the information we have in front of us.

Guided by direction from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Government and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Berlin-Boylston Regional School District has developed three separate school reopening plan scenarios: 1) a hybrid model that combines in-person learning and remote learning; 2) a fully remote learning model; and, 3) a fully in-person learning model. On August 7, 2020, our School Committee approved our school reopening plan using a [hybrid model](#) as follows: Students in grades K-12 will be divided into two cohorts; Cohort A and Cohort B.

Cohort A students will attend school in-person on Monday and Tuesday, and Cohort B students will attend school in-person on Thursday and Friday. On the opposite days from which the students will be *in school*, they will work remotely on assignments provided by the teacher(s). On Wednesdays, students may participate in whole class lessons and meetings both synchronously (a live virtual session with the teacher) and asynchronously (a recorded session with the teacher). This day will also be used by teaching staff for planning, meetings, and other

responsibilities. It will also be a day in which the custodial staff exercises deep cleaning in the school buildings.

The anticipated date of the first day of “in-person” school for our first cohort of students is scheduled to be Monday September 14th, with our second cohort arriving on Thursday, September 17th.

Preschool programs for both Special Education students and typical peers will operate in person whenever possible, regardless of the model the rest of the school is following and when it is deemed safe to be in the building. (To review our entire District Re-Entry Plan, please go to: bbrsd.org.)

The Berlin-Boylston Regional School District will return to fully in-person instruction when state and local authorities deem it safe to do so. Should we have future mandated closures due to COVID-19, all schools in our district will pivot to Remote Learning. In this case, teachers who had been working in the hybrid model will transition to a fully remote model, delivering daily lessons online. In all remote options, attendance will be taken daily. Students in grades K-12 will submit lessons daily using Google Classroom. They will receive feedback on complete work and will also have access to teacher support. Regardless of the learning model (hybrid remote, or in-person), we will follow DESE guidelines for time on learning, and all students will be required to follow a structured schedule for learning. The minimum school year for Massachusetts districts is 170 days this year, and students are required to receive a minimum of 850 hours of structured learning time in elementary school and 935 hours in secondary schools.

We are very much aware that remote learning requires equitable access by all students to technology. To that end, we will be loaning chrome books and providing hotspots to those families who have indicated a need.

Our school district opened for faculty and staff on Thursday, August 27th with safety protocol training held immediately for *all* persons. This will be followed by 10 full days of training professional development, and planning so that they will be ready to welcome students back to learning in the hybrid model.

In closing, please be assured that we will navigate this school year together. I cannot imagine doing it any other way. We will continue to update you regularly as new information unfolds. Please check our website: bbrsd.org. And while there are new rules, protocols, and procedures to follow, we will go through this all together as well. I wish you all well in these final summer vacation days, and I look forward to seeing your children back in our schools in a few weeks.

Respectfully,

[Jeff Zanghi, Superintendent of Schools](#)

Department of Curriculum and Grants

IMPORTANT UPDATE FOR ELEMENTARY FAMILIES

A CHANGE IN THE REMOTE LEARNING PLATFORM PLAN FOR STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES WHO HAVE CHOSEN TO PARTICIPATE IN ONLINE LEARNING ONLY

At this time, we would like to make you aware of a change to the remote learning platform for students in grades K-5. (Please note: This does not affect the Edgenuity platform for students in grades 6-12). Additional information came forward to us late last week regarding: the K-5 component of *Edgenuity* that has forced us to alter the remote learning platform structure for these grades. In last week's Commissioner's Report, and confirmed through a follow-up conversation with our DESE remote learning platform liaison, we learned that the company that *Edgenuity* subcontracts with to handle the K-5 grades would only accept school districts with a minimum of **250** participants for the platform. We were not made aware of this prior to the notification and our district, like many other smaller districts faced a new obstacle.

On Friday, August 21st, together with the principals from both Berlin Memorial School and Boylston Elementary School, we participated in a webinar to learn more about the second option. Based upon the presentation and the product that was shared, we felt that the quality and substance did not meet our expectations. We decided, then, to explore an option that had not been afforded to us before, one that was based on the additional information we had collected about the number of students who would be participating in the remote learning platform as well as the number of staff returning this year.

As a result, a new approach was created; one that affords many features that parents of K-5 remote learners had initially hoped would be addressed. This approach enables our remote learning students to be separated into two cohorts, similar to students attending the hybrid model. Each cohort would receive synchronous instruction each day for two days in ELA and mathematics from one of our district elementary literacy specialists and our district elementary mathematics specialist. In addition, students will receive synchronous instruction in social studies and science.

On opposite days from synchronous instruction, students will be assigned grade level remote learning assignments that they will work on asynchronously. (Again, this is similar to the hybrid model). Remote learning students will also be afforded the opportunity to enjoy a designated grade level class meeting time on Wednesday, participate in asynchronous art, music, and physical education classes and take advantage of the numerous digital tools currently used on the elementary level including: *Envision 2020 Mathematics*, *Reading Wonders*, *Mystery Science*, and *Freckle* as well as other grade level specific learning tools.

Most importantly, students who are participating in the remote learning "platform" experience, will more easily be able to transition into the hybrid model should they choose to return to school physically at a designated point during the school year. We are currently recommending that this opportunity occur at the end of each trimester at the elementary level.

The need to change and adapt to the current situation has opened up to us what we believe to be a far better option for K-5 students. At this time, we want to emphasize that the remote learning plan change was designed based on most current information and the specific number of students who have opted for full remote. It is vital that we cap the class size in order to maintain the viability of the plan and therefore, we will not be able to accommodate changes to current selections.

Additional information for those families who have opted for the remote learning experience will be made available by the elementary building principals over the next two weeks. If you have further questions, please contact your building principal or me at the email addresses below:
John Campbell, Principal of Berlin Memorial School - jcampbell@bbrsd.org
Carol Costello, Director of Curriculum & Grants - ccostello@bbrsd.org
Alfred Thomposn, Principal of Boylston Elementary School - athompson@bbrsd.org

EDGENUITY RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS IN GRADES 6-12

We are gearing up to provide the *Edgenuity* platform to our students in grades 6-12. Students who have enrolled in the remote learning platform in these grades will receive additional information *no later than* the week before school begins (September 8th -11th) Below are links for parents and students to learn how *Edgenuity* works. We will also post these links on our website

[Virtual Resources Parent Resources](#)

[Instructional Services](#)

[Student Experience Video.](#)

CONFUSING TIMES - CONFUSING TERMS

Finally, in an effort to clarify the confusion around some of the terms we have been using related to teaching and learning at this time, our Parent Communication Team has put together a PowerPoint to help you better understand the meaning of terms we have been using in meetings and discussions with the community. [Here is the link to that PowerPoint.](#) We will also add this PowerPoint to the [website.](#)

[Carol Costello, Director of Curriculum and Grants](#)

Business Office

Bus routes

Bus routes are currently being developed by our bus vendor, NRT Bus. There are two sets of routes, one set for Monday-Tuesday, and another set for Thursday-Friday. These routes will

likely differ from existing, as it will be a smaller set of students on each route due to the cohort sizes. We hope to have routes posted by next week's update.

Information on additional safety measures being added were provided in the re-opening plan, including seating arrangements. Please review the re-opening plan for details.

School Lunch Program

Over the summer, a new Director of Food Service was hired to replace Maryellen Fryburg who retired at the end of the school year. Our new Director is Lauren Staples. Lauren has six years of food service experience, with three year of management experience in high volume environments, most recently with Sodexo. She has a Bachelors in Science in Food and Nutrition from Framingham State University, which included National School Lunch Program (NSLP) training. She has a passion for community nutrition, and is looking forward to serving and working with our students, staff and the larger school community.

We also hired a new Lead Cook at Boylston Elementary School, Jenny Wright was promoted into this role. She is replacing Paula Perro who also retired last summer.

School lunch offerings will restart when students return to school. Daily offerings will be provided, as well as grab and go meals for the days that students will not be in school. More details will be provided in next week's update.

Facilities

Updated daily and weekly cleaning and disinfecting schedules have been developed for the new school year, including nightly disinfecting of each school. Water bubblers will be decommissioned, and additional water bottle filling stations/dispensers are being installed next week to replace them. The custodial team will be working hard to keep our schools clean and safe. Additional information will be uploaded to the district COVID-19 page next week.

[Bob Conry, Director of Finance and Operations](#)

Technology Department

Chromebooks/Devices for Student use

The original number of requests for devices was 185 which we were going to be able to distribute and still maintain our level of devices in the classroom at last year's level. This was due to the fact that we were able to purchase an additional 100 Chromebooks through our technology budget as well as a generous donation from a Boylston resident that allowed us to purchase an additional 54 Chromebooks and repair and additional 20. Unfortunately, with the latest number of requests for Chromebook devices from families in the district being over 340, it is clear that we will not be able to fulfil all requests and at the same time maintain a sufficient

number of devices on-site for students. To that end the technology department is recommending to move to a 1:1 model with Chromebooks as the device being used.

We have had to pivot rather quickly so all details are still being worked out. I hate to use the term “in the coming days” but I find myself needing to use that here because there are still too many unknowns in order to share a concrete plan. So, in the coming days we will share more specifics around where and when devices will be given to students as well as the policies and procedures that will be put in place regarding sign-off forms, optional insurance for devices and other needed policies to make this work for our students and families as well as the District.

Priority is still going to be centered on families who have said they do not have access to devices or enough devices in the home. Also, all efforts are being made to bring this plan on-line in time for all students that will need devices to have them in hand by the time school starts on September 14.

We will post future details on the website as well as forward additional emails around this 1:1 program. I will also hold an informational Zoom session, again at a point where enough details are locked down for me to give solid answers and not have to say “that is still TBD” for more than half the questions. We are hoping to have that session late next week or the Tuesday following Labor Day. I ask for your patience with both the tech department and for our building principals so that our inboxes do not get filled with too many questions around this program, many of which we may not yet have the answers for.

Families needing Internet Access

An order has been placed for the Verizon Hotspots. I will be in contact with the families that requested them shortly. Overall there is a shortage of these devices nation-wide, so there is a chance that we will not have them in time for the first day of school. If this is the case, we will try to make other arrangements so that your children will still have access to the materials needed for their classes.

Family Owned Devices

I understand the principals have also received calls and emails around students bringing in their own devices to school. I can understand with concerns around COVID that this may be a choice some families want to make. I have always felt as the Technology Coordinator it is often my job just to not get in the way of something, and I feel this is one of those cases. That being said there are a few things families should know before deciding to have your child bring a family-owned device to school. First, my department does not have the staff to be able to support that family-owned device. This means we cannot interact with the device to do things like load software or troubleshoot issues. While we will obviously try to be helpful, the bottom line is we can only dedicate our time to supporting district-owned devices. Second, we have in each building an open wireless network that will allow outside devices to connect to the Internet. This does not, however, allow the device to access other network resources such as shared network drives or printers. We also reserve the right to remove any device from the network which we feel may be causing problems with the over-all performance of the network, for example if a student was

downloading massive amounts of material that was resulting in network slow-downs for other users.

Please continue to stay safe and thank you for your support of our schools.

[Paul Mara, Director of Technology](#)

Pupil Personnel Office

Pupil Personnel Services FAQ's

Special Education

Moving into the new school year, DESE has indicated that districts are responsible for providing Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and implementing students' Individualized Educational Program (IEPs) as agreed upon. Delivery of services identified in the IEP, however, may look differently and therefore districts are also responsible for communicating with families and students about how and when services will be implemented. Students identified as "high needs" will have priority for full time (4 days) in-person services, so long as it is safe to do so and that the local board of health supports in-person services and the opening of schools. The document below identifies questions and answers regarding Special Education services and Section 504 Accommodation Plans as they relate to the opening of school. (Please note that guidance and directives are constantly evolving and changing.)

Q: What is the criteria for students who will receive four days of in-person special education services?

It would be our hope to have as many students back in school as possible. However, the safety and well-being of students, families, and staff has been and must continue to be our top priority as an educational community. Based on our classroom capacity, we will need to adhere closely to the guidelines outlined by DESE in an effort to ensure we are able to maintain the six-foot social distancing requirement.

Students qualifying for four days of in-person special education services are described below and such students must meet the following criteria:

According to the [Guidance on Fall 2020 Special Education Services from DESE, dated July 9, 2020](#), students with significant and complex needs, as well as preschool children, will be prioritized for receiving in-person instruction. Students with complex and significant needs include:

- Students already identified as "high needs" through the IEP process on the IEP form entitled "Primary Disability/Level of Need-PL3." Such students must meet at least two of these criteria:
 - Their services are provided primarily outside of the general education classroom;
 - Service providers are special education teachers and related service providers;
 - Special education services constitute more than 75% of the student's school day;
- Students who cannot engage in remote learning due to their disability-related needs;
- Students who primarily use aided and augmentative communication;
- Students who are homeless;

- Students in foster care or congregate care; and/or
- Students who are dually identified as English learners

Using the above guidelines, Special Education personnel are working to further analyze service delivery grids for each student. The District used this analysis of students' IEPs in conjunction with the DESE criteria for prioritizing in-person learning to develop proposed schedules for students with complex and significant needs, considering what is feasible within the health and safety guidelines.

Q: What will service delivery for students with disabilities look like in the “new normal”?

- Students will receive a consistent schedule of classes, services, interventions and therapies as outlined in the signed and accepted IEP. Some services may be delivered remotely to minimize contact, if appropriate. Liaisons will be in touch with families to discuss their child's plan at the beginning of the year.
- Students will have structured learning time to access state standards
- Students will have frequent interaction with teachers, teaching assistants, related service providers (i.e. Psychologists, Speech and Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Board Certified Behavior Analysts, Physical Therapists) and other trained staff to ensure participation

Q: My child does not meet the criteria for the definition of “high needs,” however is a student with a disability. What will services look like for my child in a hybrid model?

Students will receive services both in- person and remotely per the above-mentioned definitions. An emphasis will be placed on providing as many services “in-person” as are feasibly possible and safe to deliver in-person.

Q: My child meets the criteria for “high needs” and receives most of their services in a substantially separate setting, however there is an element of inclusion in their IEP. How will inclusion service be provided if my child is expected to remain in their sub separate cohort?

Due to the constraints of social distancing, IEP teams will make every effort to include students in inclusive settings, even if that is through remote access; every effort will be made to make that opportunity a reality for students.

Q: What is the criteria by which students will be identified to get more in person services/schooling?

Special Education services, as identified in the current IEP, are identified as follows:

Walk-in services- Individually determined based upon the student's service delivery grid.

Less than 2 hours per week of services - 2 days - follows hybrid/cohort model. Students in this model will receive their IEP services when they are either in person or remote. Service providers will be in contact to get parent feedback.

2+ hours of services, less than 75%. Students in this model may receive their IEP services both during in-person attendance and remotely depending on their individual service delivery grid. If services are going to be delivered differently than what is outlined in the IEP, parents will receive notification.

Over 75% of day - 4 days in school attendance and remote instruction on Wednesdays. Students in this model will receive their IEP services during in-person days and/or remotely, depending on their individual service delivery grid.

Parents will receive notification from their Special Education providers outlining specifics for their child.

Q: How will parents be made aware of the service delivery for their child?

IEP teams are working to develop cohorts and service delivery schedules for all students. While DESE requires that all agreed upon services in the IEP are implemented, it is understood given the current health and safety requirements, they will look different. Your student's Special Education team will be communicating with you about this.

Q: If my child is to receive services remotely, what will that look like?

Remote learning will be more robust than the experience from the spring of 2020. It is expected that students will receive an "instruction and services" model of remote learning through

- A regular and consistent schedule of classes, services, interventions and therapies
- Structured learning time to provide access to state standards
- Frequent interactions with teachers, therapists and support staff
- Synchronous lessons via teleconference and/or video conference
- Asynchronous lessons via recorded lessons

Q: My child receives "services only" (walk-in) at the school. How will services be delivered?

In an effort to maintain cohorts and reduce the visitors to the school buildings, Service providers will contact parents to consider if remote services are feasible, or if the student will come into the building.

Q: If a family opts to participate in the state learning platform for remote learning, will they still be eligible for IEP services through their own school?

If a parent chooses remote learning it is assumed that the parent prefers to keep their child out of in-person instruction. For students on IEPs, service delivery would continue to include the IEP services that their child receives if they are in school, although those services will be delivered remotely. Special education teachers will be in contact with parents early in the year to discuss services.

Q: If a parent opts for remote learning and their child is scheduled for an evaluation, how will that be addressed?

In order to obtain valid results, many evaluations must be conducted in-person, either completely or in part. The psychologists and related service providers will complete as much of the evaluation as they can remotely, however, we may need to ask parents to bring students to the building to meet in person. When in person, safety protocols will be followed. The staff and student will wear masks, or face shields where

appropriate, and be as distanced as possible. Additionally, Plexiglas dividers may be used when it is necessary for an evaluator to be less than 6 ft. apart from the student.

Q: What will be the procedure for IEP and 504 meetings in the Fall of 2020?

Given the requirements for social distancing provided by DESE, team meetings for both Special Education and Section 504 plans will be held remotely via teleconference, Google or Zoom whenever possible. If a parent or guardian requests an in person IEP or 504 meeting, all efforts will be made to accommodate the request following all social distancing requirements.

Q: My child was due for an evaluation in the spring of 2020 and due to school closure, that evaluation was not completed. What are the next steps?

IEP teams will be prioritizing evaluations based on the timelines resulting from the date the district received consent. The District priority continues to be that timelines are met. That said, if, at any time during the evaluation period, unforeseen circumstances arise due to health and safety issues that impact the timely completion of evaluations, the special education team will continue to work with families to address any potential delays. If that is not possible, special education administration or liaisons will work with families in an attempt to come to an agreement to waive or extend initial evaluations, re-evaluations or Team Meetings as needed.

Q: How will eligibility and re-evaluations be conducted?

Once school resumes, special education staff will be scheduling outstanding assessments in a timely manner. Some evaluations, where feasible, will be completed remotely, but most will need to be “in-person” assessments. Special Education Coordinators and/or a member of the evaluation team will be in contact with families and students to discuss all options.

Q: How will outstanding Annual team meetings be scheduled?

Meetings anticipated to be held last spring will occur as soon as possible upon student return to school. We will continue to work with families to meet timelines or agree to extensions for Initial Evaluations, Re-evaluations, and IEP Team Meetings as needed. At the beginning of the year, Special Education Program Administrators will be reaching out to parents to discuss evaluations and rescheduling of team meetings from the spring.

Q: How will toileting assistance be provided for students requiring such service?

The educators working with your child will be provided with all necessary PPE, including gloves, gowns and eye protection to maintain learner and educator health. Nursing staff in each of the buildings have developed specific protocols, best practices and training for staff.

Q: My child receives transportation as a related service in the IEP. Will transportation be provided for “in-person” services?

The District will be contacting all families of students currently transported via the IEP process to ascertain families’ willingness to transport their child to school. If families are unable to transport their child to and

from school, transportation will be arranged with the District's chosen transportation company. Students riding on a transportation vehicle will have to follow all health and safety protocols put in place by the transportation company and DESE including, but not limited to wearing face masks and social distancing. If a parent begins the year by transporting their child and decides that transportation is not feasible, it is required to provide the District with notification and expect at least a 72 hour turn around for transportation to be arranged.

Q: How will students who require class support receive it during Google/Zoom sessions?

Students with IEPs will receive support in the whole group, in breakout rooms or through an additional invitation to another meeting provided by one of their teachers. Our paraprofessionals work under the supervision of our special education teachers and will receive training and support on how to best facilitate push-in services in a remote setting similar to what occurs during in-person learning.

Q: What support will be in place to help parents of children who struggled with remote learning in the past due to difficulties with attention and focus?

At the start of the school year, Special Education liaisons will be reaching out to parents to engage in collaborative conversations aimed at developing a comprehensive plan for services. Information from parents regarding their child's primary area(s) of need and ability to access remote learning will be considered and changes may be made. In addition, in a hybrid model, all teachers will be able to prepare students for their remote learning experiences when students are in-person. This will include teaching students the routines of how to use their technology, providing materials to support work at home, and preparing students for their remote activities.

Q: How will social learning goals be addressed this fall?

Special education liaisons will collaborate with parents/guardians in determining services to address individual social emotional goals. Some of the services provided could include social skills groups, small group social time, individual counseling, specific student behavior plans, check in/check out systems in addition to the general education supports that are planned.

Q: Will paraprofessionals be in the classroom with the teacher even in the hybrid model and smaller class size?

Paraprofessional support will be consistent with the student's IEP. Any changes will be discussed with parents.

Q: How will teachers, educational support professionals, as well as related service providers of students with complex needs, deliver services when close proximity and physical prompting is needed? Will they still be required to have a 3- or 6-foot space?

Staff will wear a mask and/or shield and other PPE as warranted by situation protocol provided by DESE's Guidance on Fall 2020 Special Education services. Staff will be trained on the proper use of PPE. In these scenarios' providers may need to be within a closer proximity, and for that reason masks will be worn by all staff and students.

Q: Will specialists be traveling between schools in the new structure putting additional risks for the special education population?

In order to reduce the number of teachers and students in a classroom, it is possible that Special Education teachers and related service providers may provide services remotely from within the school building. Service providers will schedule services in a manner that maintains physical distancing requirements and avoids overlapping with other staff in the classroom.

Q: Will students receive 504 accommodations during remote learning?

Yes. A free appropriate public education (“FAPE”) under Section 504 is the provision of equal access to the educational environment which continues during remote learning. Students with existing Section 504 plans are entitled to accommodations, and/or support that will allow for equal access to the provision of distance learning.

Q: How will my student receive 504 accommodations during remote learning?

All of a student's teachers are responsible for implementing the accommodations in the plan.

Q: Will we receive communication at the start of the school year regarding our students 504 plan?

Yes. Each building 504 coordinator will review their assigned students’ existing Section 504 plans and, in collaboration with each student’s teacher(s), determine which listed accommodations or supports continue to be applicable/make sense within the distance learning format the teacher(s) are utilizing.

Q: Are there exceptions to wearing masks or face coverings?

Exceptions to mask/face covering requirements must be made for those for whom it is not possible due to medical conditions, disability impact, or other health or safety factors. Face shields may be an option for students with medical or behavioral challenges who are unable to wear masks/face coverings.

Q: Can parents send children to school without a mask/face covering if they do not have access to one?

Masks/face coverings should be provided by the student/family, but all buildings have available face masks for students who need them.

Q: Do parents need to send their students onto the bus or van with a mask?

Yes. Bus company policy states that all students are required to wear masks. The drivers and monitors are aware that students are sometimes unable to wear masks or keep masks on for the durations of the ride. Drivers and monitors are also offered additional PPE, if needed.

Q: Can students in Pre-K, kindergarten, and first grade who are unmasked sit together on the rug?

Students in Preschool, kindergarten and first grade will be required to wear a mask/face covering, or a face shield if masks are not tolerated. We aim to keep all students six feet apart but lesser distances are acceptable (but no less than three feet when seated). Classrooms will be reconfiguring space to discourage prolonged close contact and encourage activities that allow children to spread out. Classrooms may design their own strategies to implement this recommendation – such as spacing chairs at tables, designing games and group activities where children may engage in play that can be spaced apart (for example, by using visual cues, like hula hoops or tape on the floor), and increasing outdoor time.

Q: Will there be role model peers as part of the preschool program?

Yes, role model peers will be part of the preschool program, but due to health and safety guidelines, some parents are choosing to keep their child at home. Therefore, the ratios of Special Education students and typical peers may not be exact.

Q: My child was referred to the District through Early Intervention and turned three during the time of school closure. What is the plan moving forward for determining eligibility for Early Intervention (EI) referrals?

The Team at the Special Education Preschool program is reviewing each and every referral on an individual basis. EI is assisting the school process by providing updated information in regards to continued service delivery and child presentation. The Team will be contacting families to either schedule evaluations or to schedule a Team meeting to utilize available information to determine eligibility.

I know this is stressful not knowing all of the details for the start of school. I hope this FAQ has provided you with some answers and eased a bit of your concern. If you have specific questions regarding your child, please email their coordinator or myself with your questions.

Nursing services:

The Nurses have created a District Health Services area on our district Web site. On the web pages you will find updated information on COVID-19, a symptom checklist, local food banks and family assistance. Other non-Covid-19 related information will also be posted, such as MA immunization requirements.

You can find the District Health Services page under the administration tab on the district website, or at this link: <https://www.bbrsd.org/domain/496>.

Please see the mandatory parent health screening checklist [here](#).

[Karen Molnar, Director of Pupil Personnel Services](#)

Boylston Elementary School

I've been getting the question this week and I realized I hadn't done a good job of communicating the first day of school! Students will begin on September 14th and we are really looking forward to it! For a full look at the updated calendar check our website [here](#).

If you haven't received a letter from the school you should shortly. On Thursday we mailed out our placement and cohort assignments. I appreciate your patience as we worked through the process. You can read about our process here or wait and read it in the letter:

Our process actually began in the spring when teachers put together their original placement recommendations. More recently, we began by looking at these lists geographically to allow for families in neighborhoods to support each other as necessary. We then aligned our students by

family, ensuring students with siblings at Tahanto (and even within the building) would be in the same cohort. Next, we reviewed special needs to make sure we could provide the appropriate services for students as required by their individual plans. Finally, we tried to balance lists using the information from our latest parent survey of students planning to attend in person versus full-time remote. We realize that no groupings will be perfect but we have tried to take as many extenuating circumstances into account as possible and feel these groupings will support all of our students.

At Tuesday's school committee I presented a hypothetical hybrid student day. Some of the details are still being worked out but I know people are trying to visualize what this can look like. I've adjusted my initial presentation and included one for each cohort for families to review.

- [BES Cohort A](#)
- [BES Cohort B](#)

I've been getting questions about supplies. The lists are posted on the website [here](#). They were created in the spring with the thought in mind that we may end up in any of the three plans (full-in, hybrid, or fully remote). While at first glance you may think, "Why do they need so many pencils if they're only in school two days each week?" the answer is because we think they may need them on the days their home too...oh and there seems to be some mysterious quality that makes pencils disappear at an alarming rate. I'll be recommending students bring materials back and forth to school each day just in case we find ourselves in a situation where we have to close for an extended period of time. The only universal addition I would make would be masks. I'd recommend sending in an extra each day (in case something gross happens to the first one). I've also seen mask lanyards that people use to keep track of them during mask breaks but this is by no means a requirement. As always, if the lists present any hardship at all, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Kindergarten Orientation - Coming Soon! Now that we have a model to follow for students to return to the building and cohorts are set, the kindergarten team and I have turned our attention to welcoming our youngest learners into the building. Parents of K students will receive an email in the next week, inviting them to a small tour of the building. We will divide our already small cohort (of approximately 8 students) in half and invite them to bring one caregiver along for the tour. This will allow us to provide families their first glimpse into BES while maintaining social distancing procedures. The groups will spend 45 minutes with sometime in the classroom, on the playground, and in the gym (where lunch will be served this year). A small snack will be served in the gym so please alert us if there are any allergy concerns. Families, please look ahead to the afternoons of September 10th and 11th. Invitations with specific times will be coming to your email shortly.

For those of you who haven't ventured through the entire Reentry Plan, I wanted to share some links that can be found on page 65. These links were put together by an elementary school subcommittee and are a list of resources for kids preparing for some of our new procedures (i.e. mask-wearing, social distancing, etc.) I'd encourage families to use this as a resource as you start preparing to return.

- [Face mask social story](#)
- [Masks and gloves social story](#)
- [Germs and Hygiene video list](#)
- [I can wear a mask social story](#)
- [Social Distance video list](#)
- [Mask desensitization protocol](#)

[**Ace Thompson, Principal BES**](#)

Berlin Memorial School

It has been 161 days since we all went home “for a couple of weeks” as Covid 19 started to change all of our lives. For all of the challenges to we have faced from then until now, and all the challenges still to be overcome, it will sure be nice to get kids back in the building!

We’ve spent a great deal of time recreating class lists to meet the needs of students and families. It isn’t always pretty, but it is the best we could do. We were able to keep siblings together across schools and address some special education needs. Those lists are now like loosely sewn fabric – start to tug at the edges and the whole thing starts to unravel. That being said, if we have made some major error, please send me an email as soon as possible. No promises, but we will do what we can.

Letters with placement information went out today – you should see them in your mailbox shortly. And, in case you missed it, school starts for students on Monday, September 14th!

At Tuesday's School Committee meeting Mr. Thompson and I presented a hypothetical hybrid student day. Some of the details are still being worked out but I know people are trying to visualize what this can look like. We’ve updated that presentation, and you can see the Berlin Memorial version here:

[BMS Cohort A](#)

[BMS Cohort B](#)

We held off on releasing supply lists until we had a better sense of what the fall would bring. I hate to ask people to spend their hard-earned money on supplies that we don’t have to have. Teachers have modified their lists, which you can find by clicking [here](#).

Finally, our teachers and staff return on Thursday, August 24th. I am confident that they will be able to fill in a lot of the details for the start of the year that I have not even considered, and we will communicate those changes as we finalize them. Keep reading these emails and have a great week!

[**John Campbell, Principal BMS**](#)

Tahanto Regional Middle High School

Please click to see the latest edition of [*Tahanto Today*](#) for the most up-to-date information.

[Diane Tucceri, Principal](#)

[Sally Stukuls, Assistant Principal](#)
